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INDIANA HISTORY AND ITS CELEBRATION

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[This paper was read at the annual meeting of the History Section of the State Teachers' Association, at Indianapolis, May 10, 1913. Much of the latter part of it was contributed originally to the memorial volume urging the suitable celebration of the Indiana Centennial in 1916, prepared under the general direction of Dr. Frank B. Wynn.]

I HAVE always admired the piety of the old Quaker woman who once said in meeting that she had "no religion to boast of." The utterance inspires confidence in the possibility of humility, and one is made to feel that the heart from which such an utterance came might really exemplify a religion that was pure and undefiled. Pride in religion would, of course, be an anomaly and a paradox. All self-glorying pride is foolish, and it generally meets what the wise men of old thought was coming to it—a sudden fall and a thud.

That scintillating weekly journal which we know as *Life* has been saying lately some amusing wise things about "State Pride." "Why," it asks, "should any one ever be proud of a little irregular blot on the map that got there without his assistance and will remain there long after he is gathered to his fathers? What is it that makes one proud of his State? Is it the climate? No climate is dependable enough to be pride-worthy. Is it the particular set of officeholders that inhabit a particular State Capitol? Is it the grafting legislators, or the representatives in Washington? Or is it the particularly excellent butchers and grocers and financiers? Or is it the particularly excellent slums, dives, and riff-raff? Who started this State pride business any way? Now that we come to think it over, we seldom hear of it from men who have anything else to be proud of. People who have hustled about and made something of themselves have no pride to waste on a political organization whose main excuse for existence seems to be to collect taxes from hard-working people and hand the money over to easy-living officeholders, who in

turn spend their time hunting up valuable public rights to hand over to private individuals, who thereupon become respectable.”¹

Such is *Life*, as it gives vent to its feelings. The passage which I have quoted is suggestive of a few of the darker aspects of almost any State, of ours as well as any other. There are many things in the State of which we have reason rather to be ashamed than proud. It is well to be reminded of these things occasionally, that we may not be too much puffed up, that we may not cultivate an unreasonable conceit of our own superiority, in talents, rank, or merit. Humility is always becoming, and no man and no State can ever be worthily great without it. Self-examination is profitable unto godliness and unto good works. It should be indulged in, not that we should compare ourselves with ourselves or flatter ourselves that we are better than others, but that we may measure ourselves by some worthy standard or ideal, that we may see what we have done that we ought not to have done, and what we ought to have done that has been left undone. This spirit, if it does not beget within us a worthy emulation to redeem the time that is to come and to make some atonement for the past that is beyond recall, will at any rate save us mercifully from a hateful insolence and disdain and contempt for others who are as good as ourselves. To this unbecoming mind an unwise State or sectional pride is likely to lead us, and whenever a State and its people come to that they have reached a stage in which appear sure signs of senility and decay,—a condition in which no one can find any legitimate source of pride for a people. If any one thinks he is showing patriotism for his State by proclaiming a pride that carries with it any such influence and tendency, he reveals a state of mind that is woefully bad and perhaps incurable. We should love our own and try to make the most of it; but to say merely because a State is ours that we should therefore resent all criticism of it and proclaim our pride and satisfaction in it,—in such a disposition neither the statesman nor the patriot citizen can have part or lot.

Patriotism as well as religion means devotion; and it is just as incumbent upon us to say in humility, as did the good Quaker woman of her religion, “We have no patriotism to boast of.” Pride and boasting are not what patriotism leads to. It leads to service, sacrifice, achievement. It will lead us to recognize our faults, to see ourselves as others see us; to lead us to see wherein we have fallen short and are falling short of the service and achievement that the

¹*Life*, May 1, 1913, p. 874.

world has a right to expect of us, in view of the opportunities that nature and nature's God have conferred upon us.

But there is another sense in which we may speak of pride as a thing of worth,—of the utmost value to any individual or any people. If it leads us to abhor that which is unworthy; if it leads us to rise above the mean and to emulate the noble; to hold fast to that which is good and to preserve it for posterity; to strive to bring to our State a worthy life and lasting achievement,—if we have the pride that leads us in this direction, it is then a virtue worthy of the highest and most constant emulation. Wherein it leads us to appreciate and admire and to preserve the worthy and noble examples of the past, and to emulate the virtues of those who have achieved good things for us, of those who have labored that we may enter into the fruit of their labor,—if this is our pride it is one of the noblest virtues of the civic spirit. The historical essayist Macaulay has said it well: "A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of their ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by their remote descendants."

I have introduced this little gratuitous homily on State pride and loyalty, preparatory to a plea for the promotion of a greater interest in Indiana history. I believe there is a great deal in the spirit with which the history of the State is to be approached. Livy was a patriotic historian of Rome. To him the chief end and aim of history was to glorify Rome and to exalt her forever. To find out the truth of history and to set it down right, might not properly stimulate Roman pride and patriotism; and therefore Livy was prone to neglect the truth for the sake of Roman honor and glory. As he delved into the record of his country's past life, he found much to reveal in honor, but much also in dishonor. He decided what history should make known and what it should suppress. In the same way does the historian find the good and the bad mingled in the past story of Indiana. There is something to be said as we contemplate this story in favor of preserving for the records of history only the good and allowing the evil that Hoosiers have done to be interred with their bones. But we know that our ancestors were very imperfect beings, that they were men of like passions with ourselves; and we are inclined to think that the true Muse of History desires us to see them just as they were, trusting us to gather lessons from their errors and shortcomings as well as from their achievements of valor and worth. In any case, an intelligent knowledge of the lives that have gone before, of what has been done to make us or to unmake

us, is most likely to promote our own betterment; and my homily may serve again to suggest one of the prime uses of history,—that it is chiefly by taking an interest in the past that we are led into a public spirited interest in our future. Without that interest we shall live only within our little fleeting present of a few score years.

We should urge this interest not because we think Indiana is the greatest State that ever was or ever will be; not because we are proud of all the things that have ever happened within her borders; not merely to glorify the worthy deeds and lives of our own people, or to seek out and uncover the curious and personal and local life that may have been known within these parts. There is a reason better than these. As no man liveth to himself, neither does any generation within the State. The State that deliberately breaks with the past is undone. Continuity of life is the law of civil society. In a very true sense we may think of our State as the heir of the past. Many generations of the past have contributed to our origin and upbuilding, and it behooves us to know how and whence we came, and what have been the agencies, influences, and factors that have contributed to our possessions, our achievements, and to the organized ways in which we live and move and have our civilized being.

I once heard an ardent and enthusiastic advocate of the study of Indiana history loudly proclaim in public audience that it was just as important for our youth, our boys and girls, to be taught the story of the "Massacre of Pigeon Roost" as for them to learn of the battle of Marathon and its historic results. Therefore, instead of requiring of the pupils so much of the time for the study of the struggles and battles of ancient peoples that have been dead and gone for so many centuries—of the Greeks with their wonderful achievements in art, literature, and civilization,—our schools should rather teach more of what concerns ourselves, of what is our very own here in Indiana, that the boys and girls, turning aside from Marathon and Salamis, Cannae or Runnymede, may learn more of "Pigeon Roost," Ouiatenon, and the pioneer struggles with the Delawares and Kickapoos. The professor of Greek who heard this enthusiastic devotee of Indiana history very naturally expressed his dissent at what he considered misguided and one-sided public teaching, and I confess that my sympathies and judgment went with the professor of Greek. All happenings of the past are not of equal importance. The battles of the kites and the crows in the forests are just as important to history as are the unrecorded struggles of unorganized and uncivilized men in the jungles and caves of the earth. I think it is Professor Seeley

who has suggested some such simile. History deals with man as a political being in an organized civil state. The history of Indiana is not a thing separate and apart from the history of civilization; it is not merely local, sectional, particularistic, or personal. It is because it is a part of a great and noble whole, because it is within the stream of time, that we should study it, preserve it, record it, and make it known. Indiana has made some worthy contributions to the history of the West. The people who made these contributions, in deeds well done and long gone by, were not altogether conscious of their importance or of their place in history. If they had had more of the historic spirit and been more deeply conscious of their own political being, they would have left more for history in their laws, their manners, and their accomplishments. In many ways their life has died with their generation, and I presume in their darkness and ignorance has deserved so to die.

But there is much preserved and to be preserved that serves to connect us with the race and with the past. It is our contribution to the common fund. It behooves us to understand it and to hand it down not only unimpaired, but increased and improved. It has been saved to us chiefly by those who have had an intelligent sense of their responsibility; by those who have had some pride of worth; by just such men as our friend Dr. Frank B. Wynn, who made during this last year an heroic effort to induce the Legislature of the State to seize the opportunity of the coming centennial in 1916 to cultivate in a large public way this knowledge and reverence for the past as a means of promoting the glory of the future. This public-spirited civic soldier of the State did not find the full measure of support that he had a right to expect, but we may be sure that his efforts for the suitable celebration of our centennial will not be without effective results.

This celebration of Indiana's centennial, which Dr. Wynn and his committee have been so worthily advocating, should keep in view two aspects in commemoration of Indiana history.

I. It should be the occasion and the means of promoting the study, collection, and preservation of materials for the history of Indiana.

II. It should produce a worthy public celebration and commemoration of the historic past of the State.

The first of these ends will relate to what is of the more permanent and enduring value, the latter to the more immediate, popu-

lar, and spectacular side of the centennial celebration. Let us speak first of the second aspect of the centennial year.

I.

While a material and spectacular celebration of a hundred years of the State's history will be fleeting and will pass away with the jubilee exercises of the year, yet its influence may be abiding for years to come. This aspect of the celebration is of importance, and much care and attention may wisely be devoted to it. It may be made an expression of noble devotion to the State, of a worthy public spirit and a fine patriotism which may beget in the rising generation a deeper love for Indiana and a more intelligent appreciation of her achievements, while to the generation that is passing from the stage of action there may be given much joy and satisfaction in having been a part of a worthy past.

Let us portray in pageantry a hundred years of Indiana history before the people of the State. This can be done by—

(a) A *grand spectacular procession* through the streets of the capital city, illustrating many interesting and varied aspects of our history. We would suggest a visual illustration and a representation by means of floats or a series of tableaux of the following:

I. PIONEER LIFE.

1. An Indian Group. The Wigwam, showing the industry and domestic life of the Indians. The descendants of the Indiana Indians may be obtained.
2. The Life of the Pioneer Trapper and Wood Ranger, the *Coueurs de Bois*.
3. La Salle and the Jesuits.
4. The Pioneer Settlements at Ft. Vincennes, Ft. Wayne, and Ouiatenon; the Trading Post.
5. The Scene of the Transfer from the French to the English.
6. George Rogers Clark and the Capture of Vincennes, 1779.
7. Scenes in the Battle of Tippecanoe.
8. The Inauguration of the Territorial Government, 1800.
9. The Council of General Harrison with the Indians.

II. THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT.

1. The Early Log Cabin: Half-faced Camp.
2. Early Log Cabin: the Round Log Type.
3. Early Log Cabin: Hewed Log Type, interior view, woman spinning, etc.
4. Making the Constitution under the Corydon Elm.
5. Governor Jennings taking the Oath of Office.
6. Making the New Purchase, 1818.
7. The Founding of Indianapolis.

8. Transfer of the Capital to Indianapolis: How Samuel Merrill transported the Treasury (Ox Team).
9. An Early Church Meeting.
10. The Circuit Rider.
11. An Early Schoolhouse. Scenes from *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*.
12. The Founding of Indiana University.
13. Early Transportation and Travel.
 - (a) The Packhorse.
 - (b) Coaching and Post Days.
 - (c) Flatboat and Canal Boat.
 - (d) The Early Tavern.
 - (e) The "Movers" and Conestoga Wagon. Scenes on the National Road, of which Washington Street was a part.
 - (f) The Early Steam Train.
14. A Political Campaign. "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too." Log Cabin and Hard Cider, and the Coonskin.
15. A Husking Bee and an Apple Peeling.

III. SLAVERY AND THE WAR.

1. The Underground Railway.
2. Lincoln speaking at Indianapolis en route to Washington.
3. Governor Morton offering Troops to Lincoln for the Union.
4. Governor Morton commissioning Union Officers, Lew Wallace, *et al.*
5. Union Soldiers leaving for the Front.
6. The Women at Home in War Times.
7. Arrival of News from the Front.
8. The Boys coming back from the War.
9. Indiana's Record in the Civil War; Roster, Number Enlisted, Dead, Wounded, etc. Tableaux of Arms.

IV. LATER INDUSTRIAL AND MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT.

1. Mining.
2. Agriculture.
3. Manufacturing.
4. Transportation.

V. A SERIES OF TABLEAUX, SETTING FORTH THE LIFE OF THE STATE IN—

1. Literature.
2. Art.
3. Science.
4. Education.
5. Human Welfare.

These are tentative suggestions. Other features will be thought of, and the details and the execution of the spectacle can be wrought out by care and thought on the part of those who are competent and skilled in the art of exhibition.

(b) In addition to the spectacular procession we could have a play, or a series of tableaux in a fixed place with repeated perform-

ances during the centennial celebration. They should be designed to illustrate scenes, incidents, and characters in Indiana life. Men like Mr. McCutcheon could supply a series of popular cartoons to picture to us the past, and no doubt men of the standing of Mr. Meredith Nicholson, Mr. Booth Tarkington, and Mr. George Ade, would lend their literary and dramatic art to promote a suitable memorial celebration in honor of the State. The best mind and talent of Indiana can be brought to the service of such a worthy enterprise. A good basis for such a dramatic presentation might be found in Mr. McKnight's work, *Indiana, A Drama of Progress*.

The pageant and the tableau have now become well known means of arousing civic pride and interest in local history. They are an attractive way of vividly presenting the past and at the same time of presenting a form of popular entertainment in anniversary celebrations. The moving tableaux and the written book together, with characters well represented and the lines well spoken, will bring out pictures in history that may leave lasting impressions in the minds of great masses of people.²

II.

But what we do for Indiana history should not pass with the day or the year of the celebration. The centennial should produce a more abiding result. It must leave us richer in historical materials, in the accessible sources from which the history of the State may be written, and in creditable accounts of that history. The occasion should lead the State to do more for the preservation of materials for her history, and to promote the collection, editing, and publication of materials that will have a value to the State for the centuries to come. The State should make suitable provisions for fostering *An Indiana Historical Survey*,—such as is already begun in Indiana University. The survey should keep in view certain definite ends:

1. The preparation and publication of a complete Bibliography of Indiana history. This should present a list, with a brief description, of every known work,—book, essay, pamphlet, etc.—touching any period or phase of Indiana history, with a citation as to where the work may be found. This should be supplied to every library in the State, so that any citizen of the State who wishes to know may easily learn what books and sources are available in print on the history of the State.

²Illustrations of what has been done in celebrations by the tableau and the pageant may be seen in an article by Mr. Herbert T. Wade, "What the Pageant Does for Local History," in the *Review of Reviews* for September, 1913.

2. There should be an organized and directed effort for the collection, preservation, and publication of Indiana historical materials. There should be a well-sustained agency constantly at work for the attainment of this end. The materials that are being wasted and lost should be saved and collected, placed in the proper libraries for safe-keeping, catalogued and arranged for the use of students and writers. Pamphlets, books, letters, documents, newspaper files, journals of travel, diaries, etc., etc.—all such materials should be saved from being lost or destroyed or carried away from the State. Indiana, from a lack of provision and of proper public concern, has in the past been remiss in this respect. The people of the State should be encouraged to save these materials of their history, and to place them where they can be safeguarded and be made most easily available for use.

3. In the third place, the State should encourage and sustain the publication of a series of monographs on Indiana history. Such monographs might not be profitable in the book-trade, though they may be of the highest value. They should show the result of a careful and scientific study of our history. They can be undertaken and worthily produced only by men or women who have been suitably trained for such work. Their real value will be in exact proportion as they are the products of serious, scholarly, painstaking, and scientific study. The centennial year will likely bring forth for sale to the public a batch of mushroom writings called histories of Indiana. They will generally be the products of a few months or of a single season of hurried work, based on inadequate materials, and generally by persons who have few qualifications for writing history. Such publications will add nothing to our real knowledge of the history of the State. Their prime purpose will be to make money for their publishers and authors. They will be carelessly prepared, erroneous, and misleading, dealing with misleading and fanciful stories and exaggerated myths. To counteract such misinformed and misinforming work, it seems eminently desirable that the State should undertake the publication of a series of historical collections, comparable to those of Massachusetts, New York, Michigan, etc., and such as Illinois is now carrying out in such a notable way.

The interest of every community should be aroused and to this end we believe that county and local historical societies should be encouraged and increased in every possible way.

The school forces of the State should be utilized, and this Section of the State Teachers' Association, devoted to the study and teaching

of history, should lend every possible aid in developing popular interest in local history. Every added man or woman in any community who becomes interested in the past life of his or her locality will prove a helpful factor in the more effective work of the teacher of history and civics. Effective teaching comes from effective living, and the teacher of history in a community awake to the values of its past will find his work the more enlivened and fruitful. Let the teacher of history be a leader in this cause. His advanced pupils may become his companions and his aids in the worthy work, and it will not require many devoted disciples of so good a cause, if they work hand-in-hand, to bring to a community a most productive society.

There is an organ that will enable all these forces to work together for a common end. I refer to the *INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY*. It may serve as an organ of service and expression. Through it may be brought to light the discoveries that are made in any part of the State, and the papers that may be written. Its issues may be the means of bringing to hundreds of citizens who are already interested in the history of the State matters that will seem to them of importance if not of vital concern, while the indifferent may be aroused to a curiosity that may bear fruit in the future. Its files will help to preserve the history of the State, and will afford workable mines for future writers and historians. For every reason this *INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY* should be fostered and sustained, its circulation increased, and its messages received and heeded in every city, county, and village in the State. The teachers of history will receive help from it, and after providing a file for their own tables, they should strive to see to it that a copy of it is placed in every school library in Indiana. In this way the teachers of history who may be or may not be members of the State Teachers' Association, may very effectively help to promote the cause of "Indiana History and Its Celebration."